

without departing from the spirit of the invention as set forth and defined by the following claims. In particular, it should be noted that although disclosed in connection with operation within one particular type of cellular system, the present invention may be used in any cellular telephone system supporting intra-network textual message delivery.

What is claimed is:

1. A communications system, comprising:

a cellular communications network comprising a plurality of mobile stations engaging in cellular telephone communications as well as short message service message communications wherein at least one short message service message contains a destination address in a non-cellular communications network as well as a network designation identifying that non-cellular communications network for the destination address;

a plurality of non-cellular communications networks for carrying network message communications; and

means connected between the cellular and non-cellular communications networks for facilitating inter-network message communications, said means functioning to perform a conversion of short message service messages originated at mobile stations on the cellular network to network messages transmitted for delivery by a certain one of the non-cellular communications networks to the destination address and to identify that certain one of the non-cellular communication networks for converting and delivering the network message from the network designation.

2. The communications system as in claim 1 wherein the non-cellular communications network comprises a conventional telephone network and the network messages comprise facsimile messages.

3. The communications system as in claim 2 wherein the destination address comprises a facsimile telephone number, the means for facilitating further functioning after short message service message conversion to deliver the converted short message service message as a facsimile message transmitted over the conventional telephone network to the facsimile telephone number identified in the non-cellular communications network destination address.

4. The communications system as in claim 1 wherein the non-cellular communications network comprises a local area network (LAN) or wide area network (WAN) and the network messages comprise e-mail messages.

5. The communications system as in claim 4 wherein the destination address comprises a LAN/WAN address, the means for facilitating further operating after short message service message conversion to deliver the converted short message service message communication as an e-mail message transmitted over the LAN or WAN to the LAN/WAN address identified in the non-cellular communications network destination address.

6. The communications system as in claim 1 wherein the means for facilitating further operates after short message service message conversion to forward the network message comprising the converted short message service message to that certain one of the plurality of non-cellular communications networks identified in the network designation.

7. A message center for a cellular communications network, the cellular communications network supporting the transmission of short message service messages to and from mobile stations, the message center including an inter-network communications functionality facilitating the transmission of messages between the cellular communications network and a plurality of non-cellular communications networks connected thereto wherein each of the messages

contains a destination address in a non-cellular communications network as well as a network designation identifying that non-cellular communications network for the destination address, the non-cellular communications network supporting the transmission of network messages, said inter-network communications functionality operating to convert short message service messages originated at mobile stations to network messages for transmission over a certain one of the non-cellular communications networks to the destination address and to identify that certain one of the non-cellular communications networks for converting the network message from the network designation in the short message service message.

8. The message center as in claim 7 wherein the non-cellular network comprises a local or wide area network (LAN/WAN) and wherein the destination address comprises a LAN/WAN address, the functionality further operating after short message service message conversion to transmit an e-mail message comprising the converted short message service message to the LAN/WAN address.

9. The message center as in claim 7 wherein the non-cellular communications network comprises a conventional telephone network and wherein the destination address comprises a facsimile telephone number, the functionality further operating after short message service message conversion to transmit a facsimile message comprising the converted short message service message to the facsimile telephone number.

10. The message center as in claim 7 wherein the functionality further operates after short message service message conversion to forward the network message comprising the converted short message service message for transmission over that certain one of the plurality of non-cellular communications networks identified in the network designation.

11. A method for inter-network message communications, comprising the steps of:

receiving a short message service message originated at a mobile station of a cellular communications network, said message received at an interconnection point between the cellular communications network and a plurality of non-cellular communications networks, and said message including a destination address in a non-cellular communications network as well as a network designation identifying that non-cellular communications network for the destination address;

converting the received short message service message for transmission as a network message over a certain one of the non-cellular communications networks, the step of converting including the step of identifying the certain one of the non-cellular communications networks from the included network designation and the step of identifying a destination on that certain non-cellular network for the network message comprising the converted short message service message from the included destination address; and

delivering the network message over the certain non-cellular communications network to the identified destination address.

12. The method as in claim 11 wherein the non-cellular network comprises a conventional telephone network, and the step of converting further includes the step of converting the short message service message to a facsimile message.

13. The method as in claim 6 wherein the short message service message includes a field containing a facsimile telephone number for the destination address of the network message, and the step of identifying further includes the step